First Degree Initiation

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People:

- Hierophant (H) (Initiator)
- Candidiate (C)
- Hierophant's Working Partner (P)
- Summoner (S) (Hierophant does his part if S unavailable)
- High Priestess (HPS) (actually, H or P, depending on gender)

Needs:

- blindfold
- nine foot red cord
- short white cord
- oil
- scourge
- all ordinary esbat requirements

Preparation:

Candidate stands outside Circle to NE, blindfolded and bound by members of the opposite gender. Wrists are bound together in back by middle of a 9 foot red cord, knotted in front at throat with ends hanging down front as cable-tow. A short white cord is fastened to the right ankle with ends tucked in so as not to trip C up, saying:

> Feet neither bound nor free

HPS casts Circle. Opening ritual is followed to the end of the Drawing Down of the Moon, but the Charge is not yet declaimed.

Summoner fetches Sword (or athame) from the altar, and opens a gate in NE. S, H, and P face C and S issues the Challenge:

S:

> O thou who standest on the threshold between the pleasant world of men and the dread domains of the Lords of the Outer Spaces, hast thou the courage to make the assay?

Placing point of blade against C's heart, S continues:

S:

> For I say verily, it were better to rush on my blade and perish, than make the attempt with fear in thy heart.

C:

> I have two passwords. Perfect love and perfect trust.

S:

> All who have such are doubly welcome.

H:

> I give thee a third to pass thee through this dread door.

H grasps C above waist with H's left arm, kisses C on the lips, and swings C into the Circle with H's body, from behind.

S (or P if no S) closes the gate.

H leads C to each Quarter in turn, saying:

H:

> Take heed, ye lords of the East (South/West/North) that N... is properly prepared to be initiated a priest[ess] and witch.

H leads C back to centre of Circle (via East) while coven dances around, singing:

> Eko, eko Azrak, (etc.)....

... over and over, meanwhile pushing C back and forth among them, until H calls a halt.

Partner then rings bell three times as H turns C to stand before the altar, with C's back to the altar (i.e. facing South if altar is in North). H stands in centre of Circle, facing C (and altar). H says:

H:

In other religions, the postulant kneels, while the priest towers above. But in the Art Magical we are taught to be humble, and we kneel to welcome her [/him] and we say: [kneels]

> Blessed be thy feet, which have brought thee in these ways;[kiss r. foot, then l. foot]
> Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar;[kiss r. knee, then l. knee]
> Blessed be thy womb[/phallus], without which we would not be;[kiss above pubes]
> Blessed be thy breasts [/breast], erected in beauty [/formed in strength];[kiss r. breast, then l. breast]
> Blessed be thy lips, that shall utter the sacred names.[kiss on lips] [rises]

H:

> Now we are going to take your measure.

H, aided by another witch of the same gender, stretches a button thread from the ground by C's foot to crown of C's head and cuts it there with athame or bolline.

Measure C once about the forehead with the cut thread and knot at the point of overlap, again about the heart starting from the same end [knot], and lastly about the hips across the genitals [knot]. The measure is wound and placed upon the altar. H asks:

H:

> Before thou art sworn, art thou ready to pass the ordeal and be purified?

C:

> I am.

H, aided by another witch of the same gender, helps C to kneel, head and shoulders bowed forward. The loose ends of the short cord are unwound and C's ankles bound securely. The cable tow is fastened to the altar. H fetches scourge from altar as Partner rings bell three times, saying:

P:

> Three.,

H scourges C firmly, but tenderly, thrice.

P says (but doesn't ring bell):

P:

> Seven ... Nine ... Twenty-one.,

And each time H scourges C with the number of strokes P has named, and all should be light, yet firm, save only the very last which may sting somewhat as a reminder that H. has been deliberately restrained. Hierophant then says:

H:

> Bravely thou hast passed the test. Art thou ready to swear that thou wilt always be true to the Art?,

C:

> I am,

H:

> Art thou ever ready to help, protect and defend thy brothers and sisters of the Art, even though it should cost thee thy life.?,

C:

> I am,

H:

> Then say after me: I, N..., in the presence of the Mighty Ones, do of my own free will and accord, most solemnly swear, without any reservation in me whatever, that I will ever keep secret, and never reveal, the secrets of the Art, except it be to a proper person, properly prepared within a Circle such as I am now in. This I swear by my hopes of a future life, mindful that my measure has been taken; and may my weapons turn against me if I break this my solemn oath,

H and other witch of the same gender help C to feet. P fetches anointing oil and chalice of wine. H moistens fingertip with oil saying:

H:

> I hereby sign thee with the Triple Sign. I consecrate thee with oil ...,

H touches moistened finger to just above pubes, right breast, left breast, and above pubes again. H moistens fingertip with wine and anoints the same three places, saying:

H:

> I consecrate thee with wine ...,

H:

> I consecrate thee with my lips ... [kiss as above] Priest[ess] and witch.,

C is now unbound and the blindfold removed by H and assistant of same gender. New Initiate is welcomed by coven, then presented with the Working Tools. As each tool is named, H takes it from the altar and passes it to the Initiate with a kiss. As each tool is finished with, the assistant takes it from the Initiate [kiss] and replaces it upon the altar. H says:

H:

> Now I present to thee the Working Tools.,

> First, the Magic Sword.,

> With this, as with the athame, thou canst form all Magic Circles, dominate, subdue and punish all renellious spirits and daemons, and even pursuade angels and good spirits. With this in thy hand, thou art ruler of the Circle.,

> Next I present the Athame. This is the true witch's weapon and has all the powers of the Magic Sword.,
>
> Next I present the White-hilted knife. Its use is to form all instruments used in the Art. It can only be used in a Magic Circle.,
>
> Next I present the Wand. Its use is to call up and control certain angels and genii to whom it would not be meet to use the Magic Sword.,
>
> Next I present the Cup. This is the vessel of the Goddess, the Cauldron of Cerridwen, the Holy Grail of Immortality. From this we drink in comradeship, and in honour of the Goddess,
>
> Next I present the Pantacle. This is for the purpose of calling up appropriate spirits.,
>
> Next I present the Scourge. This is the sign of power and domination. It is also used to cause purification and enlightenment. For it is written: 'To learn you must suffer and be purified.' Art thou willing to suffer to learn?,

C:

> I am,

H:

> Next and lastly I present the Cords. They are of use to bind the sigils of the Art; also the material basis; also they are necessary in the Oath,

> I now salute thee in the name of Aradia, newly made priest[ess] and witch [kiss],

H and P now face the new Initiate and deliver the Charge.

The Initiate may consecrate his athame here; he must consecrate it before using it.

Cakes and Wine

The Initiate is now presented to each Quarter in turn by the Hierophant, saying:

H:

> Hear ye Mighty Ones of the East [S./W./N.]; N... has been consecrated priest[ess], witch and hidden child of the Goddess.
> to north declaim:
> Hear ye Mighty Ones of the North; Boreas, thou guardian of the Northern portals; thou powerful God, thou gentle Goddess; N... .... (etc.)

Close Circle.

A graduation party should follow.

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